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SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MINORITIES

Rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

1. The addendum contains the text of the reply from the Government of Madagascar to a note verbale dated 8 October 2001 sent to Member States and Observer States, United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, requesting information in connection with the better protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

2. The Government of Madagascar considers that, in view of the large number of minorities and the fact that they are scattered over the various continents, it is essential that they should group together in a national association, federation or non-governmental organization in order to ensure that their views are given due weight by the competent entities (courts, local authorities). A member of a minority would encounter a lack of understanding on the part of the authorities if he acted in isolation. Such an association would also constitute an effective means of safeguarding the right of minorities to establish an international "entente" composed of representatives of minorities according to socio-cultural origin and country. Eventually, an international association of ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities could be set up in order to receive complaints, grievances and claims originating from the national minorities' association.

3. In order to give effect to the rights of minorities, the Government of Madagascar also proposes that a draft international convention should be drawn up, recognizing the right of minorities to assert their legitimate aspirations, either individually or collectively, through the national association.

4. Lastly, the Government of Madagascar envisages the possibility of organizing a periodic world conference on the right of minorities to self-determination. This right comprises access to property ownership and natural resources, questions which may give rise to violence and even armed conflicts between rival groups.